



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Plans

Updated as of August 2023

1. What happens if a chronic wasting disease (CWD)-positive is confirmed at my facility?

Once the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) has confirmed you have a CWD-positive animal, depending on your circumstances, the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) will either issue a hold order or a quarantine restricting the movement of all CWD susceptible species, any related animal-products, and equipment from your premises.

2. Do I need to sign a herd plan?

Yes. Once movement restrictions are issued, they will remain in place until the terms and conditions of the herd plan requirements have been successfully completed.

3. What is the purpose of a herd plan?

A herd plan describes the specific pathway for release of your premises from the CWD hold order or quarantine. Without a signed herd plan, a premises owner may be confronted with requirements which change as circumstances and regulations evolve during the hold order or quarantine period. Whereas, with limited exceptions, the herd plan limits the requirements to those specified in the herd plan when it was originally agreed upon by all parties.

4. What are examples of reasons the TAHC may amend a signed herd plan?

The herd plan contains provisions allowing the TAHC to amend the herd plan requirements based on changing circumstances. These circumstances may include when CWD surveillance testing reveals a trace herd has a CWD positive animal; the total number of CWD-positive animals in a herd increases over time; new TAHC rule or policy changes are adopted; or any other change in circumstances warranting different requirements in order to contain or mitigate the spread of CWD.

5. Are the terms of the herd plan negotiable?

No. Although most herd plan requirements are determined by TAHC rules and a risk evaluation of each premises, there are some instances when unique circumstances exist which may require considering alternative requirements to help mitigate the spread of CWD. In those instances, the TAHC may consider these alternative requirements, provided all parties support the proposed change(s).

6. Who do I contact about questions for my proposed herd plan?

Contact the TAHC Region Office where your premises is located with questions or concerns regarding your proposed herd plan. A TAHC representative will discuss your specific situation with you.

7. Why does it take so long to receive my herd plan?

Every effort is made to quickly develop herd plans, but CWD remains extremely challenging to manage due to many unique factors. In Texas, the regulation of CWD is governed by three separate agencies, each with limited authority to manage the disease. In order to ensure all applicable regulations are followed to mitigate the spread of CWD, herd plans are developed as cooperative agreements between the herd owner and all three agencies. When CWD-positive and trace herd numbers increase, added logistical constraints are placed on staff attempting to keep up with the volume of new cases.



8. Which governmental agencies are involved in governing the management of CWD in Texas?

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection (APHIS) Service Veterinary Services (VS), Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), and the TAHC all play a role in helping to manage CWD in Texas.

9. What should I do to avoid compliance issues with a herd plan?

The TAHC highly encourages producers to read and understand their entire herd plan before they sign the document and begin to complete any of its requirements. When attempting to satisfy the herd plan requirements without fully reading or comprehending all the terms and conditions of the agreement, problems can arise. Failing to completely satisfy all herd plan requirements may cause the quarantine or hold order to remain in place longer than otherwise necessary.

10. What are some common noncompliance issues that producers encounter with their herd plans?

Some examples of common noncompliance issues include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Harvesting and testing trace animals prior to the prescribed start date, as specified in the herd plan.
- Harvesting and testing animals which are not identified in the herd plan as test eligible animals.
- Collecting and submitting incomplete tissue samples.
- Not specifying the type of CWD laboratory test on the laboratory submission form (IHC test is required and must be indicated on the submission form).
- Requesting the incorrect CWD laboratory test (IHC test is required).
- Not CWD testing all available trace animals identified in the herd plan.
- When trace animals are unavailable for testing, failing to submit a letter to the TAHC explaining the reason why the trace animals are unavailable for CWD testing.
- Failing to properly record and provide the date CWD samples were shipped or submitted to the laboratory for testing and providing the date to the TAHC.
- Failing to provide the TAHC with copies of the laboratory CWD test results for all animals tested.
- Failing to upload in TWIMS the CWD test results for each animal tested under the herd plan.
- Failing to record all available forms of animal identification on harvesting and testing records.

11. When is a quarantine or hold order released?

Once all herd plan requirements are successfully completed, contact the TAHC Region Office where your premises is located. Request an epidemiological assessment be performed to evaluate whether all herd plan requirements have been satisfied. If all requirements have been successfully completed, the quarantine or hold order may be released by the TAHC, provided no other issues exist.

12. Who should be contacted if questions arise about a herd plan?

Should you or your authorized agent have any questions or concerns regarding the terms and conditions of your herd plan, please contact the TAHC Region Office where your premises is located and a TAHC representative will assist you.

